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# THE AUSTRALIA 2020 SUMMIT

The Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable Kevin Rudd, convened the Australia 2020 Summit at Parliament House on the 19th and 20th of April 2008 to help shape a long term strategy for the nation's future.

The Australia 2020 Summit brought together some of the best and brightest brains from across the country to tackle the challenges confronting Australia – challenges that will require responses that extend beyond the short term, three year electoral cycle. The Summit reflected the Rudd Government's belief that Australians, irrespective of their political views, can come together to build a modern nation capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

Over 1000 leading Australians came to Parliament House to debate and develop long term options across 10 critical areas:

1. The Productivity Agenda – education, skills, training, science and innovation
2. The Future of the Australian Economy
3. Population, sustainability, climate change and water and the future of our cities
4. Future directions for rural industries and rural communities
5. A long term national health strategy – including the challenges of preventative health, workforce planning and the ageing population
6. Strengthening communities, supporting families and social inclusion
7. Options for the future of Indigenous Australia
8. Towards a creative Australia: the future of the arts, film and design
9. The future of Australian governance: renewed democracy, a more open government (including the role of the media), the structure of the Federation and the rights and responsibilities of citizens
10. Australia's future security and prosperity in a rapidly changing region and world.

The Summit was co-convened by the Prime Minister and Professor Glyn Davis, Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne.

Participants were selected by a 10 member non-government Steering Committee. The Steering Committee selected up to 100 participants in each of the Summit areas to attend in a voluntary capacity. Participants were drawn from business, academia, community groups, industrial organisations and the media and included a number of eminent Australians. Summit participants were invited as individuals rather than as representatives of particular organisations. Each of the 10 Summit areas was co-chaired by a Federal Government Minister and a member of the Steering Committee.

The Summit had the following objectives:

- To harness the best ideas across the nation
- To apply those ideas to the 10 core challenges that the Government has identified for Australia to secure our long term future through to 2020
- To provide a forum for free and open public debate in which there are no predetermined right or wrong answers
- For each of the Summit's 10 areas to produce options for consideration by the Government following the Summit
- For the Government to produce a public response to these options with a view to shaping the nation's long term direction from 2009 and beyond.

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# RESPONDING TO THE IDEAS

The Summit generated over 900 ideas, covering a wide range of issues across the 10 streams. The Summit continued a broader national conversation about Australia's future that occurred in the lead up to the Summit. This conversation included contributions from the Youth Summit held on 12–13 April 2008, more than 500 school summits across Australia, local summits, an African Summit in Melbourne and a Jewish Symposium in Sydney. Some 8800 public submissions were also collected. Summaries of submissions were made available to summit participants. All of these ideas informed the discussion at the main Summit, and in many cases are reflected directly in the ideas in the final report and this response.

The Prime Minister stated at the opening of the Summit:

*Some of these ideas we will be able to embrace. Others we will not. And some we will take in part and change. But, you know something? It is far better we ask the question and have the answers come forward, so that the whole process of national creativity in the ideas debate for our future occurs, rather than throttling it before it starts. There are no right and wrong answers when it comes to a discussion among people of good heart, good mind and good will.*

Ideas in this response to the Summit are considered in one of four ways:

1. Key ideas being taken forward by the Government
2. Ideas the Government will consider further
3. Ideas others may progress
4. Ideas with no further action at this time.

## 1. Key ideas being taken forward by the Government

The Government has already embraced a large number of good ideas from the Summit.

- Some of these are innovative practical ideas that demonstrate the creativity of the Summit, such as the Mentoring in the Workplace: Golden Gurus and the Deployable Civilian Capacity announced as part of this response
- Some of these are ideas that the Government acted upon immediately, such as the Review of the Australian Tax System launched in May 2008
- Some of these are ideas that supported, endorsed or built upon key commitments already being progressed by the Government, such as the Healthy Kids Check, which commenced in July 2008 and the Education Revolution being progressed with the states and territories.

In each case, the Government has carefully considered and reviewed the idea proposed by the Summit and has committed to taking it forward.

## 2. Ideas the Government will consider further

The Government is still considering a number of ideas:

- Some of these relate to areas where the Government is still developing policies, such as the Government response to the Review of the National Innovation System and the Indigenous Cultural Education and Knowledge Centre scoping study
- Some of these refer to areas where action is progressing but could be taken further. The Government will revisit the Summit ideas as part of the next steps it takes in these areas
- Some of these are good or ambitious ideas that need more development or may be best considered in the future.

The Government will continue to consider these ideas as it responds to the wide range of important issues facing Australia and determines its priorities for the future.

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### 3. Ideas others may progress

A range of ideas relate to areas where the Commonwealth Government is not the natural leader or has limited capacity to act.

- Some of these ideas are commercial or business initiatives, more effectively led by the private sector
- Some ideas lie in areas where the community sector has significant expertise, such as youth development camps
- Some of these ideas relate to areas that are the clear and appropriate responsibility of the states and territories.

Many of these ideas are already being progressed and discussed within the relevant sectors. Where appropriate, the Government may be open to engaging with or supporting these initiatives in some way if they are taken forward or progressed by others.

### 4. Ideas with no further action at this time

In a small number of cases, the Government does not believe further action is warranted at this point.

- Some of these are where existing programs or institutions are already addressing the key objectives of the idea
- Some of these ideas may not have wider community support
- Some of these ideas would involve significant practical or legal challenges to implement
- Some of these ideas simply do not stack up in terms of their benefit to Australia.

Regardless of whether or not a particular idea is being taken forward at this time, all of the ideas have contributed to the Government's thinking about the future and are a vital repository of ideas to be drawn upon for years to come about how we can build a more secure, stronger and fairer Australia that is prepared for the challenges of the future.

# STRUCTURE OF THE RESPONSE

This document responds to ideas from each of the Summit's 10 work streams.

While there were over 900 individual ideas or comments, many ideas supported a common initiative or outcome. For this reason, the Government has grouped ideas as they relate to specific outcomes or responses. For example, where a number of ideas propose or are being addressed by a National Preventative Health strategy, they are grouped together and the Government has responded to them collectively. This ensures that the document focuses on the key outcomes sought by the Summit's participants.

In addition, many ideas from the Summit were not exclusive to a single work stream, with common ideas and themes emerging across the 10 work streams. For example, seven of the streams provided ideas on improving education, demonstrating the strong priority given by participants to the revitalisation of education in Australia across a range of contexts. Similarly, seven streams made recommendations for further support for indigenous Australians. Some of these key themes are shown in the figure below.

The Government felt that it was important to respond collectively to ideas raised across several discussion streams, drawing together the similarities and key threads, and indicating where ideas had wide support. Where an idea supports a group of related ideas in another work stream, these ideas are listed together or referred to and the supporting work streams are acknowledged. This means that in some instances ideas will be listed in more than one stream as they are closely related to the discussion of both streams. This leads to some duplication within the document, but shows where ideas were shared and broadly supported.

## Key themes discussed across multiple Australia 2020 work streams

	1 productivity	2 economy	3 sustainability	4 rural	5 health	6 communities	7 Indigenous	8 creative	9 governance	10 security
International development and trade	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓
Education and workplace productivity	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Infrastructure, Deregulation and tax reform	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Innovation and creativity	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		
Social inclusion and a fair Australia	✓	✓		✓		✓				
Closing the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Human Rights and Access to Justice	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓
Health and Ageing	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				
Climate change related challenges	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Community & Local Government Engagement	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	
A Modern Federation and constitutional reform		✓		✓			✓		✓	